Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Draft Environmental Assessment

Tongue River Reservoir State Park Enhancement

August 8, 2006

MONTANA STATE PARKS

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

MEPA/NEPA CHECKLIST

MISSION. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, through its employees and citizen commission, provides for the stewardship of the fish, wildlife, parks, and recreational resources of Montana, while contributing to the quality of life for present and future generations

All Montanans have the right to live in a clean and healthful environment. This brief environmental analysis is intended to provide an evaluation of the likely impacts to the human environment from proposed actions of the project cited below. This analysis will help Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks to fulfill its oversight obligations and satisfy rules and regulations of both the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The project sponsor has a responsibility to ensure that all impacts have been addressed. Some effects may be negative; others may be positive. Please provide a discussion for each section. If no impacts are likely, be sure to discuss the reasoning that led to your determination.

Tongue River Reservoir State Park Enhancement
Draft Environmental Assessment
MEPA, NEPA, MCA 23-1-110 CHECKLIST

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Type of Proposed Action:

Development	___X__
Renovation	_____
Maintenance	___X__
Land Acquisition	___-__
Equipment Acquisition	_____
Other (Describe)	_____

2. Name of Project:
Tongue River Reservoir State Park Enhancement

3. Name, Address, and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:
Cathy Stewart
Parks Operations Supervisor
Region 7 Headquarters
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
PO Box 1630
Miles City, MT 59301
406-234-0926
cstewart@mt.gov

4. If Applicable:
Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: Fall 2006
Estimated Completion Date: Fall 2008
Current Status of Project Design (percentage complete): 35%

5. Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range, and township)

Tongue River Reservoir State Park is located on Tongue River Reservoir, Bighorn County. It is located six miles north of Decker on Secondary 314, then 1 mile east on county road. The proposed project will occur in Range 40 E, Township 8 S, Sections 25, 26, 27, and 35.

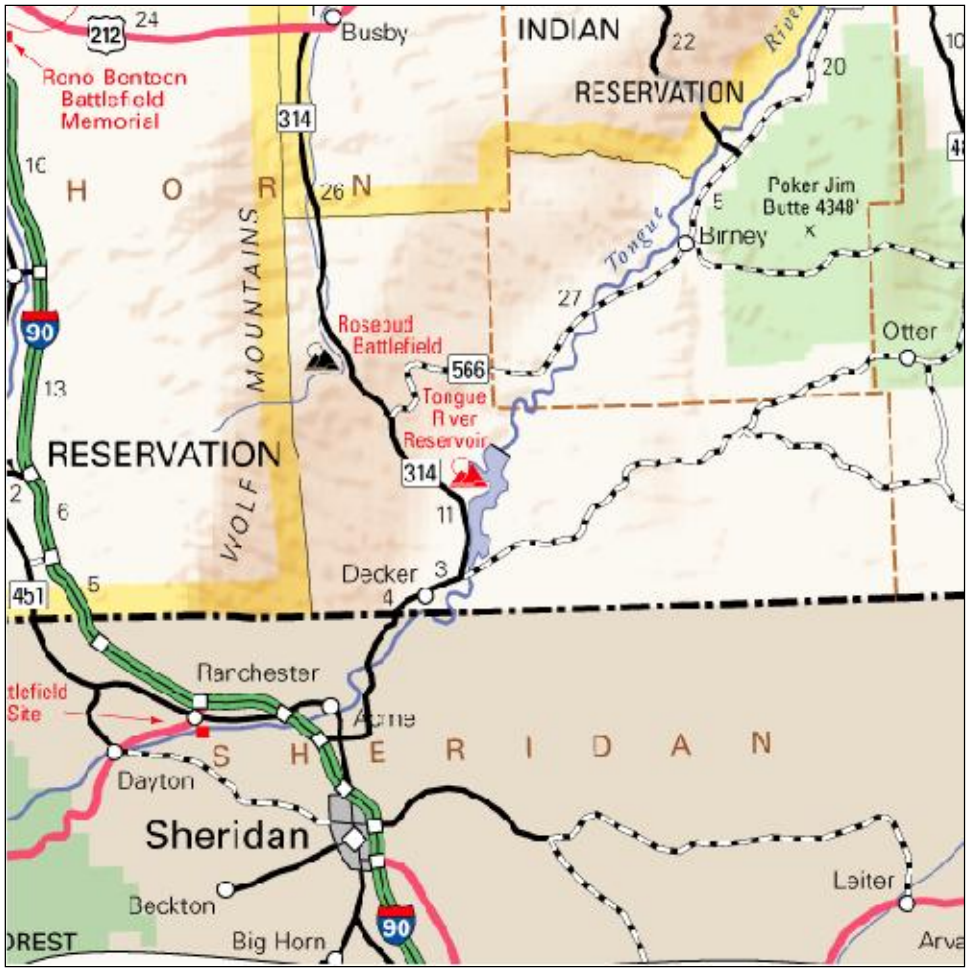


Figure 1: Red Park symbol delineates location of Tongue River Reservoir State Park.

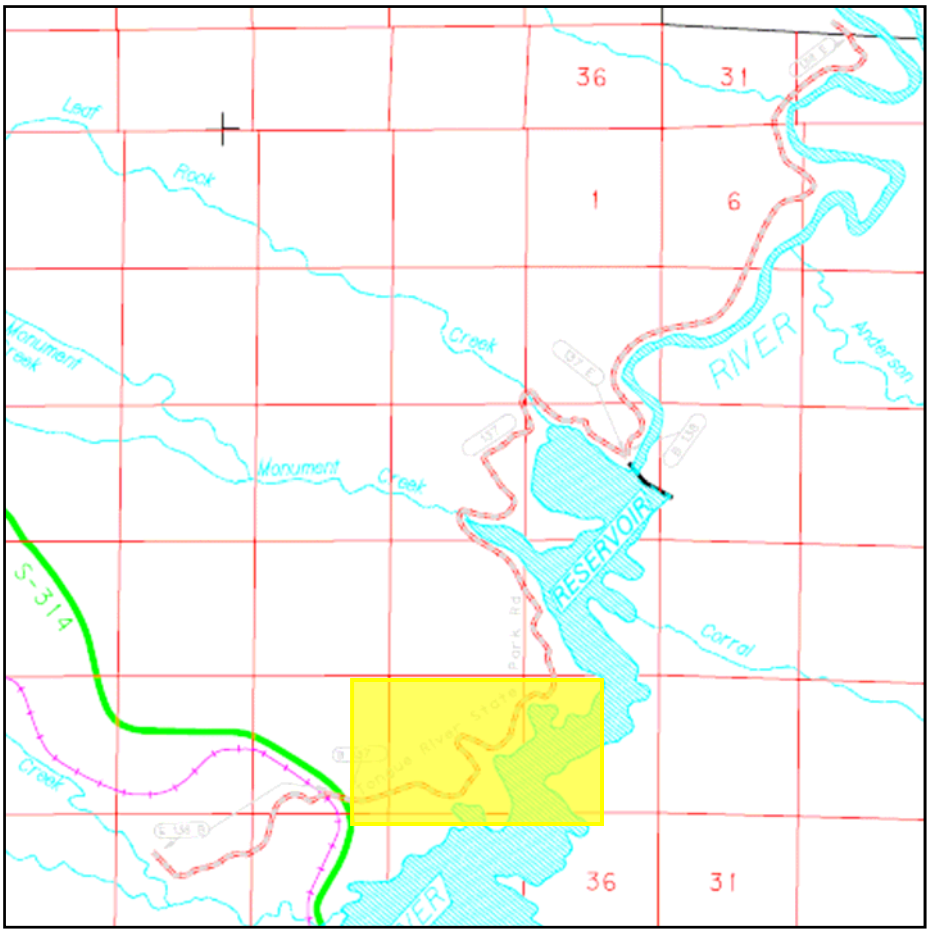


Figure 2: Yellow Box delineates approximate location of proposed project at Tongue River Reservoir State Park.

6. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:

(a) Developed:
Residential ..... 0 acres
Industrial ..... 0 acres

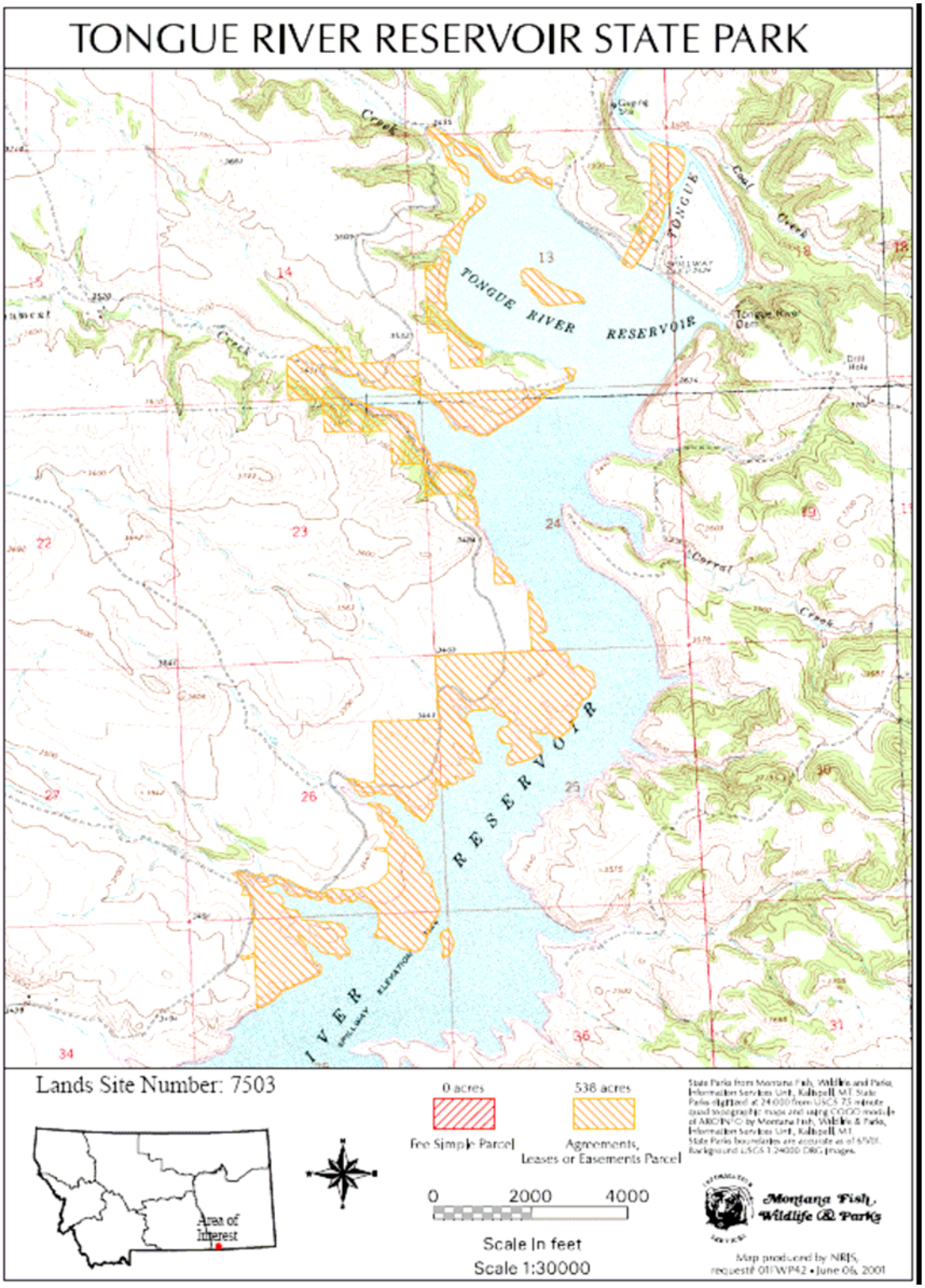
(b) Open Space/Woodlands/
Recreation..... 25 acres

(c) Wetlands/Riparian
Areas..... 0 acres

(d) Floodplain..... 0 acres

(e) Productive:
Irrigated cropland ..... 0 acres
Dry cropland..... 0 acres
Forestry ..... 0 acres
Rangeland..... 0 acres
Other ..... 0 acres

7. Map/site plan:



8. Listing of any other Local, State, or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.

(a) Permits:

Agency Name	Permit	Date Filed/#
MFWP Stream Bank Protection	124	
Montana Department of Environmental Quality	318	
Bighorn County	Floodplain Permit	
Army Corps of Engineers	404	
Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)	Storm Water Discharge	
DEQ	Public Water System	

(b) Funding:

Agency Name	Funding Amount
Boat in Lieu	$ 150,000
Parks Earned Revenue	$ 50,000
Highway Fuel Tax	$ 400,000
Federal WB	$ 906,250
Total	**$1,506,250**

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

Agency Name	Type of Responsibility
DNRC Water Project Office	Landowner

9. Narrative summary of the proposed action or project including the benefits and purpose of the proposed action.

Tongue River Reservoir State Park Description and Background

Tongue River Reservoir State Park receives approximately 80,000 visitors annually. The number of visitors to the park is increasing annually. This is likely due in part to the increase in population in and around Billings and Sheridan, Wyoming areas. Many activities are available at this 642-acre state park, including boating, fishing, swimming, camping, picnicking, bicycling, wildlife viewing, and photography. The 12-mile long reservoir is situated among scenic red shale, juniper canyons, and the open prairies of southeastern Montana. Due to its remote location most vistors stay at the park. There are six campgrounds located throughout the park with camping for RV's and tents. There are numerous locations for motorboat access to the reservoir including one marina and two boat ramps. The park is loved by Montana and Wyoming anglers, campers, and boaters. Water sports are popular here and the reservoir boasts excellent fishing as five state record fish have been pulled from its waters (i.e., black crappie, northern pike, rock bass, white crappie, and yellow bullhead).

Many anglers utilize the park for its diversity of fishing opportunities. Excellent game fish opportunities in the reservoir exist for black and white crappie, channel catfish,

smallmouth bass, walleye, and yellow perch. Other fish species in the reservoir include common carp, green sunfish, largemouth bass, longnose sucker, northern pike, pumpkinseed, rock bass, shorthead redhorse, spottail shiner, stonecat, white sucker, yellow bullhead, and black bullhead. Walleye have been stocked in the reservoir each spring (50,000 at 1.2 inches) and summer (1,000,000 at 0.2 inches) since 1996. Sauger were stocked in the reservoir in the spring of 2003 and 2004. In 2003, an angler survey estimated that there were a total of 23,991 days fished (77% residents, 23% nonresidents) on the reservoir with 560 trips. In 2003 the reservoir ranked 27th in the state and first in Region 7 for number of days fished. The reservoir has ranked first in the Region since 1997.

The Tongue Reservoir State Park has received federal funding in the past to improve motorboat access from the Tongue River Dam mitigation settlement to address impacts from the dam reconstruction and increased reservoir elevation. Mitigation funding was used to replace State Park facilities that existed prior to the dam reconstruction. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks received additional funding to increase motor boat access ($1,096,000 mitigation funding; $799,475 Wallup Breaux federal funds; $615,525 state funds; $2,511,000 total project). The projects included constructing a concession and storage building at Camper's Point, installing a new dock with 12 slips at the Camper's Point marina, constructing dry storage area at Camper's Point, installing new signs, picnic tables and fire rings at Camper's Point and Pee Wee Point, constructing a new road at Rattlesnake Point and installing new signs at Sand Point. In addition the park receives federal funding for motorboat access operations and maintenance through grant F-95-DMA. Work completed under this grant includes general operations and maintenance at the park specifically related to motorboat access and use.

The Rattlesnake Point, Camper's Point, Pee Wee point, and Sand Point Areas will be affected by the proposed project. In addition, the county road that runs through the park will be paved from Hwy 314 to a point approximately 100 yards beyond the Sand Point turn-off.

Rattlesnake Point

Rattlesnake Point is divided into two areas, the Rattlesnake Point area, and Rattlesnake Point Island. Camping is available at Rattlesnake Point. There are ten developed campsites with picnic tables and fire rings, one vault latrine, and two garbage sites. The Rattlesnake Island area can be accessed by either boat or by vehicle. When Tongue River Reservoir is at or near full pool, the gravel road to Rattlesnake Island is covered with water and thus only accessible by boat. The island is a day use area and has one vault latrine and one garbage site.

Camper's Point

Camper's Point is the home of a majority of park developments. Motorboat activity and camping are the main activities in this area of the park. The park headquarters, manager's residence, and administrative storage area are all located at Camper's point making this a central location for employees at the park. In addition, a 40-unit

campground and marina are located at Camper's Point making this a central area for all visitors to the park. There are two information kiosks, garbage cans, three day-use picnic shelters with tables, and a day use parking area. In the campground, the 40 hard-pad campsites all have picnic tables and rings. There are six vault latrines, four water spigots, fish cleaning station, and trailer dump station. There is a double wide concrete boat ramp with a courtesy dock. The marina at Camper's Point offers a variety of sundry items, beverages, fuel, a slip dock, and a dry dock storage area. At the administrative storage area at Camper's point, there are three septic tanks with one lift station and leach field, a shop, two wells, a garbage transfer station, and other maintenance items.

Pee Wee Point

The Pee Wee Point areas are also important to campers and motorboat users, as there are two campgrounds and a boat dock in this area. There are two separate areas, Pee Wee Point South and Pee Wee Point North, each with campgrounds. At Pee Wee Point South, there are 39 soft-pad campsites with tables and fire rings, two vault latrines, one water spigot, numerous garbage sites, and three shelters for camping. At Pee Wee Point North there are 14 soft-pad campsites with tables and fire rings, two vault latrines, three water spigots, one well, one septic tank with lift station and leach field, one well house, a single lane concrete boat ramp with courtesy dock, and day use parking.

Sand Point

The Sand Point area is a smaller, less developed area, but equally important to camper's, for those enjoying day use, and motorboat users for its beach location. In the campground, there are 7 soft-pad campsites and 25 hard-pad campsites with picnic tables and fire rings. There are three picnic shelter areas with picnic tables, five vault latrines, garbage receptacles, and a day-use beach area.

Proposed Action, Purpose, and Benefits of the Action

The proposed project is for that portion of Tongue River Reservoir State Park consisting of the park roads from Hwy. 314 to 100 yards beyond the Sand Point turn-off, Rattlesnake Point, Camper's Point, Pee Wee Point, and Sand Point. As the proposed project is extensive, proposed work will be separated by park-wide projects and specific areas (Rattlesnake Point, Camper's Point, Pee Wee Point, and Sand Point).

Park-wide projects

1. Provide upgraded electrical from Tongue River Dam to the park. Currently the park is at capacity for its electrical service. Tongue River Electric Coop will upgrade the electrical system to allow for expansion within the park. Outside of the park, the electric lines are overhead on power poles and this would allow the project to be completed over the winter.
2. Upgrade water system for the park. Current water use demands exceeded existing well production and cistern storage capacity. With the proposed improvements to the park (i.e., new housing, additional fish cleaning station, and installation of a comfort station) upgrading the water system is imperative. The upgrade will include a combination of wells and surface water treatment (with a pump and small water treatment plant). Upgrading

the water system will allow for expansion in the park and provide safe water for visitors and staff members.

3. Pave county road from Hwy 314 to a point approximately 100 yards past Sand Point turn-off (Appendix 2: Site Plan, Keynote #1). MFWP will collaborate with Bighorn County and DNRC State Water Project Bureau in order to complete this project. There is a significant dust problem within the park and the county road is the highest source of dust within the park.

Rattlesnake Point Projects

1. Pave and improve park roads and parking area at Rattlesnake Point (Appendix 2: Overall Site Plan, Keynote #2, and Site Plan, Rattlesnake Point Improvements). As described earlier, there is a significant dust problem within the park. Paving the interior park roads will decrease the amount of dust in the park. In addition, paving the interior roads will accommodate the number and type of visitors to the park.

Camper's Point Projects

1. Construct employee housing for workers at the administrative storage area at Camper's Point (Appendix 2: Overall Site Plan, keynote #8). Two three-bedroom houses will be constructed. One house is intended for a recreational Warden and family. One house is intended for seasonal workers. Seasonal workers are currently housed at a small ranch house located at Rosebud Battlefield State Park some 15 miles from Camper's Point and temporary locations around the park that are usually designated for visitors. With the increased usage of the park, these locations can no longer accommodate both visitors and seasonal workers. There are few potential employees near Tongue River Reservoir; most employees come from Sheridan, Wyoming. The commute from Sheridan is 30 miles one way. With the increase in gas prices and increase in jobs in the Sheridan area due to the boom in energy development and associated service industries, most potential employees are unwilling to commute to the park. Establishing permanent housing at the park will encourage more potential employees to seek work at the park.
2. Install electrical pedestals at 40 existing camp pads (Appendix 2: Overall Site Plan, keynote #6). Electrification of the camp loop would enable management of the park to better meet visitor expectations and enhance the recreational experience for campers. During the extended periods of 100 + temperatures campers without generators would be able to use air conditioning, boat batteries would be able to be recharged, and many other uses and options now available in RV's would be available to visitors. Modern motorhomes and campers are all equipped for electrical service. A decrease in generator use is expected to reduce noise levels in the campground. Other benefits include a reduction in gasoline spills from fueling generators and a corresponding reduction in the chance of fire from improper use and or storage of gasoline in containers.
3. Install a new drain field. The drain field at Camper's Point is at capacity. Installing a new drain field will be required with the construction of new

employee housing and the Comfort Station. The drain field will initially be constructed for the seasonal housing and will be extended when the comfort station is constructed (see Priority List for further explanation). The new drain field will likely be located behind the current dry dock area at the administrative support area at Camper's Point.

4. Construct a new maintenance and enforcement shop/storage building (40 by 40 feet) at the Administrative Support Area at Camper's point (Appendix 2: Overall Site Plan, keynote #7). More covered area is needed for maintenance projects. In addition, more covered area is needed to protect park equipment from the elements.
5. Construct a comfort station with flush toilets and showers (including ADA showers) near concession building (Appendix 2: Overall Site Plan, Keynote #3). The showers will be coin-operated to offset costs associated with a projected increase in utilities and maintenance. Currently, there is no comfort station located at Tongue River Reservoir State Park. With the increased use of the park, the current vault latrines cannot accommodate visitors to the site, and campers do not currently have a shower option in this area of the park. In addition, the new employee housing drain field will be expanded to accommodate the new comfort station.
6. Pave all interior park roads, and expand and pave existing boat ramp parking lot at Camper's Point (Appendix 2: Overall Site Plan, Keynote #2). As described earlier, there is a significant dust problem within the park. Paving the interior park roads will decrease the amount of dust in the park. In addition, paving the interior roads will accommodate the number and type of visitors to the park. Existing boat ramp parking lot is not large enough to accommodate current use. Establishing individual parking spots through paving and striping, will maximize parking capacity

Pee Wee Point Projects

1. Construct a fish cleaning station (Appendix 2: Overall Site Plan, keynote #5). Currently, there is no fish cleaning station at Pee Wee Point, yet many anglers utilize this site for fishing and boat launching. The fish cleaning station will provide an environmentally safe and acceptable fish-cleaning site. The existing water system at Pee Wee Point will be modified to accommodate the additional use from the fish cleaning station. In addition, a new drain field will be designed to accommodate the septic waste from the fish cleaning station.
2. Pave all interior park roads at Pee Wee Point (Appendix 2: Overall Site Plan, Keynote #2). As described earlier, there is a significant dust problem within the park. Paving the interior park roads will decrease the amount of dust in the park. In addition, paving the interior roads will accommodate the number and type of visitors to the park.

Sand Point Projects

1. Install a new camp loop with approximately 36 new camp pads (Appendix 2: Overall Site Plan, keynote #4, and Site Plan, Sand Point Improvements).

Each camp pad will have a gravel camp pad, picnic table and fire ring. A new vault latrine will be installed in the new camp loop. The Sand Point Area is very popular for its more rustic appeal and beach. The current campground cannot accommodate the increase in visitors.

2. Pave all interior park roads at Sand Point (Appendix 2: Overall Site Plan, Keynote #2). As described earlier, there is a significant dust problem within the park. Paving the interior park roads will decrease the amount of dust in the park. In addition, paving the interior roads will accommodate the number and type of visitors to the park.

This environmental assessment encompasses numerous projects at the park. As with any proposed project, money and time are in a limited supply. MFWP, Region 7 has drafted a priority list for these projects based on need, time, and money. The projects have been broken down into two phases. Phase-one is the most needed projects and Phase-two being the next step for the park.

Priority List

Phase-one

1. Upgrade electrical system for the entire park
2. Construct a shop/maintenance building at Camper's point.
3. Construct employee housing at Camper's point (install a new drain field as well).
4. Electrify the camp loop at Camper's point.
5. Construct a new camp loop at Sand Point.
6. Construct a fish cleaning station at Pee Wee Point.
7. Upgrade water system for the entire park
8. Pave interior roads at Camper's Point.
9. Pave interior roads at Sand Point.
10. Pave interior roads at Pee Wee Point.
11. Pave interior roads at Rattlesnake Point.

Phase-two

1. Pave the county road from Hwy 314 to 100 yards past Sand Point turn-off.
2. Construct a comfort station at Camper's Point (expand employee housing drain field).

HB495 Qualification

This proposed project qualifies as significant under HB495 (Appendix 1). The construction of new employee housing at Camper's Point, a fish cleaning station at Pee Wee Point, a comfort station at Camper's Point, and a shop/storage building at Camper's Point qualify as significant under HB495 'new building construction (buildings <100 sf and vault latrines exempt).' The construction for new employee housing at Camper's Point, a shop/storage building at Camper's Point, a fish cleaning station at Pee Wee Point, drain fields at Camper's Point, upgrading the water system park wide, and the new camp loop at Sand Point qualify as significant under HB495 "any excavation of 20 c.y. or greater." A new

camp loop at Sand Point with approximately 35 new pads qualifies as significant under HB495 ‘any increase or decrease in campsites of 25% or more of an existing number of campsites.’ Please see Appendix 1 for HB495 qualification checklist. Paving the existing road and upgrading the water system do not qualify under HB495.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

1. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a comparison of the alternatives with the proposed action/preferred alternative:

Alternative A: No Action

This alternative leaves the area in its current state of development. No development in the park can occur without an upgrade to the electrical system and water system. The county roads and interior park roads are gravel that results in very dusty conditions in the park during high traffic periods. In addition, visitors are bringing larger vehicles, trailers, and campers to the site. Current park roads cannot safely accommodate such vehicles. Current employee housing arrangements can no longer accommodate the needs of employees. With higher gas prices and greater competition for employees in the area due to the methane gas industry, the park must accommodate employees on site. The campground at Camper's Point would more successfully accommodate users with electrification of the camp loop. There is no electricity at the Camper's point camp loop; therefore, RV users must use generators or go without electricity. The use of generators can cause loud noise within the campground. In addition, generator-use contributes to possible environmental issues related to gasoline spillage and accidental fire from improperly stored gasoline. The drain field at Camper's Point is at capacity. If the drain field is not expanded, and proposed development (i.e., new employee housing and comfort station) cannot occur at the site. There is not a comfort station at Camper's Point. With continued high use of the park, the facilities at the campground can no longer successfully accommodate users. The current shop/storage building and storage area can no longer accommodate equipment and projects performed by employees. There is no fish cleaning station at Pee Wee Point, yet many anglers utilize this site for fishing and boat launching. With increased use of the park, the camp loop at Sand Point can no longer accommodate users and needs expansion.

Alternative B: Proposed Project

The proposed project will consist of:

1. Provide upgraded electrical from Tongue River Dam to the park
2. Pave the county road from HWY 314 to a point approximately 100 yards past Sand Point Turn off
3. Upgrade the water system park wide
4. Pave and improve interior park roads at Rattlesnake Point
5. Construct new employee housing at Camper's Point
6. Install electrical pedestals at existing camp pads at Camper's Point
7. Install a new drain field at Camper's point
8. Construct a new maintenance and enforcement shop/storage building at Camper's point
9. Construct a comfort station at Camper's Point
10. Pave interior park roads at Camper's Point
11. Construct a fish cleaning station at Pee Wee Point

12. Pave interior park roads at Pee Wee Point
13. Install a new camp loop with 36 new camp pads at Sand Point
14. Pave interior park roads at Sand Point.

The proposed project will result in adequate development, to meet current use patterns in the park. Upgrading the electrical service and water systems at Camper's Point and Pee Wee Point will allow for the proposed development. Paving the county road and all interior park roads will decrease dust in the park. In addition, paving will ease visitor access to all portions of the park with larger vehicles, trailers, and campers. Constructing new employee housing will accommodate employees on site, decrease employee travel costs, contribute to employee retention, and encourage more potential employees to apply for positions at the park. Electrifying the camp loop at camper's point will meet the expectations of visitors traveling with RV's and Motorboats. It will also decrease noise in the campground from generator usage and reduce possible environmental and safety issues by eliminating or at the very least reducing the number and amount of portable gasoline containers in the campground. Constructing a new drain field at Camper's Point must be done before new employee housing and the comfort station can be constructed. The comfort station will enhance the public's camping and recreational experience at this existing high-use area. Constructing a new shop/storage area and expanding current dry dock storage will accommodate the equipment and projects performed by park employees. The fish cleaning station will provide an environmentally safe and acceptable fish-cleaning site. Constructing a new camp loop at Sand Point will accommodate the increased usage at this site.

2. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

There is no mitigation, stipulations, or other controls associated with this action. Therefore, no evaluation is necessary.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

This analysis did not reveal any significant impacts to the human or physical environment. The proposed site has been used in the past as a public recreation area. This action will continue and improve that use.

Land, air, and water resources will be impacted by the proposed project. The proposed projects will cause changes in geologic substructure and some disruption, displacement, compaction, and over-covering of the soil. During construction, emissions will contain some pollutants and odors. These emissions and odors will be minor and temporary. Paving the roads will cause an overall decrease in dust in the area due to vehicular traffic. During construction, there may be discharge into surface water that may alter turbidity, dissolved oxygen, or water temperature. Construction will cause changes in drainage patterns of surface runoff. Best Management Practices will be utilized during design and construction of the project to minimize this potential. In addition, culverts will be located in areas to minimize negative effects of flooding to the road and surrounding areas.

There will be minimal impacts on vegetation, fish, and wildlife by the proposed project. All construction activities will be occurring in areas that have been previously disturbed. The proposed project will not cause changes in the plant species or plant communities of the park. Construction will disturb plants in the specific area of construction, but will not alter plant species or plant communities in the larger area of the park. To minimize the spread of weeds, revegetation with native grasses and forbes will occur in disturbed areas of the proposed project. The proposed project will not cause the deterioration of critical fish and wildlife habitat or change the diversity or abundance of game and nongame species. The proposed work will not have any impact in addition to current impacts on any fish and wildlife—including listed species.

There will be minor impacts on the human environment. There will be a temporary increase in noise during construction of the proposed project. The proposed project should not affect land use in the area. All construction will occur within the park in previously disturbed areas. Paving the park roads may decrease traffic hazards, as the road will be smoother and safer at posted speeds for large vehicles, trailers, and campers. The proposed projects will increase electrical use, water use, and sewer use at the park. The electrical system and water system will be upgraded with the proposed projects. In addition, drain fields will be added where appropriate and needed. The proposed project will improve visitor services in both site access and available facilities at Tongue River Reservoir State park. The facilities will aid in proper management of the site as well, which will provide benefits for both park users and administrators. Both the quantity and quality of the tourism/recreation opportunity and setting will be improved by the proposed project. There is a low likelihood that cultural properties would be impacted by the proposed project.

PART IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any, and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?

The public will be notified in the following ways to comment on the EA for the Tongue River Reservoir State Park Enhancement

1. Legal notices will be published in the *Billings Gazette*, *Helena Independent Record,* and the *Miles City Star*.
2. Legal notice and the draft EA will be posted on the Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks web page: *http://fwp.mt.gov/publicnotices*
3. The cover sheet will be mailed to known and potentially interested members of the public, Governmental organizations, and others.

This level of public involvement is appropriate for a project of this scale.

2. Duration of comment period, if any.

The public comment period will be 30 days. Comments may be emailed to cstewart@mt.gov, or written comments may be sent to the following address:

Cathy Stewart
Region 7 MFWP Parks Operations Supervisor
PO Box 1630
Miles City, MT 59301
406-234-0926
cstewart@mt.gov

PART V. EA PREPARATION

1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required?
NO
If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.

Based on an evaluation of impacts to the physical and human environment under MEPA, this environmental review revealed no significant negative impacts from the proposed action: therefore, an EIS is not necessary and an environmental assessment is the appropriate level of analysis.

2. Name, title, address, and phone number of the person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:

Cathy Stewart
Region 7 MFWP Parks Operations Supervisor
PO Box 1630
Miles City, MT 59301
406-234-0926

Sally Schrank
Independent Contractor
112 Riverview C
Great Falls, MT 59404
(406) 268-0527

3. List of agencies consulted during preparation of the EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Parks Division Region 7
Wildlife Division Region 7
Fisheries Division Region 7
Lands Section
Design and Construction Bureau

Montana Department of Commerce—Tourism
PO Box 200533
1424 9th Ave.
Helena, MT 59620-0533

Montana Natural Heritage Program—Natural Resources Information System
PO Box 201800
1515 East Sixth Avenue
Helena, MT 59620-1800

State Historic Preservation Office
Montana Historical Society
1410 8th Avenue
Helena, MT 59620

PART VI. MEPA CHECKLIST

Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment.

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. LAND RESOURCES **Will the proposed action result in:**	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?			X			1a.
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil which would reduce productivity or fertility?			X			1b.
c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

1a. The proposed projects may result in changes in geologic substructure. Best Management Practices will be utilized during design and construction of the project to minimize this potential.

1b. The proposed projects will result in some disruption, displacement, compaction, and over-covering of soil. Best Management Practices will be utilized during design and construction of the project to minimize this potential.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

2. AIR **Will the proposed action result in:**	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (also see 13 (c))			X			2a.
b. Creation of objectionable odors?			X			2b.
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a)		X				2e.
f. Other		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

2a. During construction of the proposed projects equipment emissions will contain some pollutants. These emissions will be minor and temporary. Paving the interior roads and the county road will result in an overall decrease in dust due to traffic.

2b. During construction of the proposed projects equipment emissions will contain some odors. These odors will be minor and temporary.

2e. The proposed projects will not result in any discharge that will conflict with federal or state air quality regulations.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

3. WATER **Will the proposed action result in:**	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?			X			3a.
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?			X			3b.
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of flood water or other flows?			X			3c.
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?			X			3h.
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
l.For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c)		X				3l.
m. For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a)		X				3m.
n. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

3a. During construction of the proposed projects there may be discharge into surface water that may alter turbidity, dissolved oxygen, or water temperature. Best Management Practices will be utilized during design and construction of the project to minimize this potential.

3b. Construction of the proposed projects will cause changes in drainage patterns of surface runoff. Paving the county road and interior park roads will also alter surface runoff drainage patterns. Best Management Practices will be utilized during design and construction of the projects to minimize this potential.

3c. Paving the county road and interior park roads may alter the flow of floodwaters and cause a minor increase in runoff. Culverts are located in areas to minimize negative effects of flooding to the road and surrounding areas.

3h. During construction of the proposed projects there is a minor risk of contamination of surface water.

3l. All work will be occurring at previously developed sites. Portions of Rattlesnake Point, Camper's Point, Pee Wee Point, and Sand Point occur within the 100-year floodplain (Zone A). The rest of the area is considered an area of minimal flooding (Zone C) as mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Administration on the FIRM Index (Flood Insurance Rate Map, Map Number 1431170B, effective date September 2, 1981).

3m. The proposed project will not result in any discharge that will conflict with federal or state water quality regulations.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

4. VEGETATION Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X			4a.
b. Alteration of a plant community?			X			See 4a.
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				4c.
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?			X		Yes	4e.
f. For P-R/D- J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		X				4f.
g. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

4a. All construction activities will be occurring in areas that have been previously disturbed. Paving the road will not likely cause changes in the plant species or plant communities of the park. Construction of the proposed projects will disturb plants in the specific area of construction, but will not alter plant species or plant communities in the larger area of the park.

4c. The Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP) found no records of unique, rare, threatened, or endangered plant species within one mile of the proposed project areas (Written communication dated June 21, 2006).

4e. Canada thistle and Salt Cedar occur in and around the park. The increased spread of Canada thistle is of concern with the proposed projects. To minimize the spread of weeds, revegetation with native grasses and forbs will occur in disturbed areas of the proposed projects. Weeds will be monitored and sprayed, as is the current practice.

4f. All work will be occurring at previously disturbed sites. None of the proposed work will occur in, or result in modification of any wetland environments, or prime or unique farmland. The Natural Resources and Conservation Service web site provide soil survey maps of the Tongue River Reservoir State Park and indicated that the Rattlesnake Point, Camper's Point, Pee Wee Point, and Sand Point areas consist of "Haverson Loam, 2-4% slope" and the area of the county road from Hwy 314 to 100 yards past the Sand Point turn-off consists of several soil types including "Wibaux loam, Hilly; Clapper-Harvey Complex, rolling; Chugter Loam, 2-8% slope; Toluca-Harvey Complex, undulating" (web site http://maps2.nris.state.mt.us/mapper/PLSSSeasch.asp. MT Prime and Important Farmlands database (http;//soildatamart.nrcs.usda.gov/Report.aspx?Survey=MT083%UseState=MT) indicate that Chugter Loam, 2-8% is a farmland of statewide importance, Haverson Loam, 2-4% is a prime farmland if irrigated, and Toluca-Harvey Complex, undulating is a prime farmland if irrigated. None of the land is currently irrigated; therefore, no prime or unique land will be impacted by these proposed projects.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

5. FISH/WILDLIFE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				5a.
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X				See 5a.
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		X				See 5a.
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				5f.
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?		X				
h. For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f)		X				See 5f.
i. For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d)		X				5i.
j. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

5a. The proposed projects will not cause the deterioration of critical fish and wildlife habitat or change the diversity or abundance of game and nongame species. The proposed projects are occurring over previously disturbed areas.

5f. The Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP) located spiny softshell and inferred the range of the greater sage-grouse in the area of the proposed project (written communication dated June 21, 2006). The spiny softshell is listed as sensitive by the U.S. Forest Service and S3/G5 by MNHP. The ranking of S3/G5 indicates the species is potentially at risk of extirpation in the state and common globally. The greater sage-grouse is listed as sensitive by the U.S. Forest Service, sensitive by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and S3/G4 by MNHP. The ranking of S3/G4 indicates the species is potentially at risk of extirpation in the state and uncommon but not rare globally. John Ensign, Region 7 Wildlife Manager (406-234-0921), confirmed to Sally Schrank, Independent Contractor, on June 27, 2006 that the proposed work will not have any impact in addition to current impacts on any wildlife—including listed species.

5i. The project will not introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location.

B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X			6a.
b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

6a. There will be a temporary increase in noise during construction of the proposed projects.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

7. LAND USE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				7a.
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				
e. Other: _____		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

7a. The proposed projects should not impact land use in the area. All construction will be occurring within the park in previously disturbed areas.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

8. RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?			X		Yes	8a.
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. For P-R/D-1, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)			X			See 8a.
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

8a. The MFWP Region 7 Weed Management Plan calls for an integrated method of managing weeds, including the use of herbicides. The use of herbicides will comply with application guidelines, and will be conducted by people trained in safe handling techniques. Weeds will also be controlled using mechanical or biological means in certain areas to reduce the risk of chemical spills or water contamination.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				9a.
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X				9e.
f. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

9a. MFWP will follow the guidelines of the good neighbor policy for public recreation lands (MCA 23-1-126.) to have “no impact upon adjoining private and public lands by preventing impact on those adjoining lands from noxious weeds, trespass, litter, noise and light pollution, streambank erosion and loss of privacy.”

9e. Paving the county road and interior park roads may decease traffic hazards as the road will be safer and smoother at posted speed limits for large vehicles, trailers, and campers.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify: _____			X			10a.
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?			X			
d. Will the proposed action result in increased used of any energy source?			X			
e. Define projected revenue sources						10e.
f. Define projected maintenance costs.						10f
g. Other:_____						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

10a. The proposed projects will upgrade the electrical and water systems at the park to accommodate the development at the park. Constructing employee housing, a fish cleaning station, and comfort station will increase electrical and water usage at the park. A new drain field will be constructed at Camper's Point to accommodate the new employee housing and will be expanded to accommodate the comfort station. In addition, the drain field at Pee Wee Point will be expanded to accommodate the fish cleaning station.

10e. No revenue will be generated from this project. The showers at the comfort station will be coin operated to pay for utilities and maintenance.

10f. Bob Peterson, Tongue River Reservoir State Park Manager, estimated the maintenance costs to be $56,000, annually. The increase in utilities for the fish cleaning station, comfort station, and seasonal housing are estimated at $36,000, annually. Road maintenance is estimated at $20,000, annually. These costs were estimated

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

11. AESTHETICS/RECREATION Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report)			X			11c.
d. For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c)		X				11d.
e. Other:		NA				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

11c. The proposed project will improve visitor services in both access and facilities at Tongue River Reservoir State park. The facilities will aid in proper management of the site as well, which will provide benefits for both park users and administrators. Both the quantity and quality of the tourism/recreation opportunity and setting will be improved by the proposed project. Please see Appendix 3, Tourism Report.

11d. No designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails, or wilderness areas will be impacted.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

12. CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric, historic, or paleontological importance?		X				12a.
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? **Attach SHPO letter of clearance.** (Also see 12.a)		X				See 12a.
e. Other:						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

12a. There is a low likelihood of disturbing any cultural or historical properties as work is occurring at previously developed sites. The State Historic and Preservation Office (SHPO) will be consulted prior to any disturbance of ground.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				13a.
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e)		X				13f.
g. For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.		X				13g.

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

13a. This analysis did not reveal any significant impacts to the human or physical environment, singularly and cumulatively. The proposed site has been used in the past as a public recreation area. This action would continue and improve that use.

13f. This project is not expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial controversy.

13g.

MFWP Stream Bank Protection	124
Montana Department of Environmental Quality	318
Bighorn County	Floodplain Permit
Army Corps of Engineers	404
DEQ	Storm Water Discharge
DEQ	Public Water System

APPENDIX 1
HB495
PROJECT QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST

Date June 27, 2006 **Person Reviewing** Sally Schrank

Project Location: Tongue River Reservoir State Park is located on Tongue River Reservoir, Bighorn County. It is located six miles north of Decker on Secondary 314, then 1 mile east on county road. The proposed project will occur in Range 40 E, Township 8 S, Sections 25,26,35.

Description of Proposed Work: The proposed project will consist of:

1. Provide upgraded electrical from Tongue River Dam to the park
2. Pave the county road from HWY 314 to 100 yards past Sand Point Turn off
3. Upgrade the water system park wide
4. Pave and improve interior park roads at Rattlesnake Point
5. Construct new employee housing at Camper's Point
6. Install electrical Pedestals at existing camp pads at Camper's Point
7. Install a new drain field at Camper's point
8. Construct a new maintenance and enforcement shop/storage building at Camper's point
9. Construct a Comfort Station at Camper's Point
10. Expand existing dry dock storage at Camper's Point
11. Pave interior park roads at Camper's Point
12. Construct a Fish Cleaning Station at Pee Wee Point
13. Pave interior park roads at Pee Wee Point
14. Install a new camp loop with 35 new pads at Sand Point
15. Pave interior park roads at Sand Point.

The following checklist is intended to be a guide for determining whether a proposed development or improvement is of enough significance to fall under HB 495 rules. (Please check _ all that apply and comment as necessary.)

[ ] A. New roadway or trail built over undisturbed land?
Comments:

[Y] B. New building construction (buildings <100 sf and vault latrines exempt)?
Comments: New employee housing, a fish cleaning station, comfort station, and a shop/storage building will be constructed.

[Y] C. Any excavation of 20 c.y. or greater?
Comments: The construction of new employee housing, shop/storage building, fish cleaning station, and comfort station will cause excavation of greater than 20 c.y. In addition, the new drain fields, upgrading the water system, and constructing the new camp loop will cause an excavation of greater than 20 c.y.

[ ] D. New parking lots built over undisturbed land or expansion of existing lot that increases parking capacity by 25% or more?
Comments:

[ ] E. Any new shoreline alteration that exceeds a double wide boat ramp or handicapped fishing station?
Comments:

[ ] F. Any new construction into lakes, reservoirs, or streams?
Comments:

[ ] G. Any new construction in an area with National Registry quality cultural artifacts (as determined by State Historical Preservation Office)?
Comments:

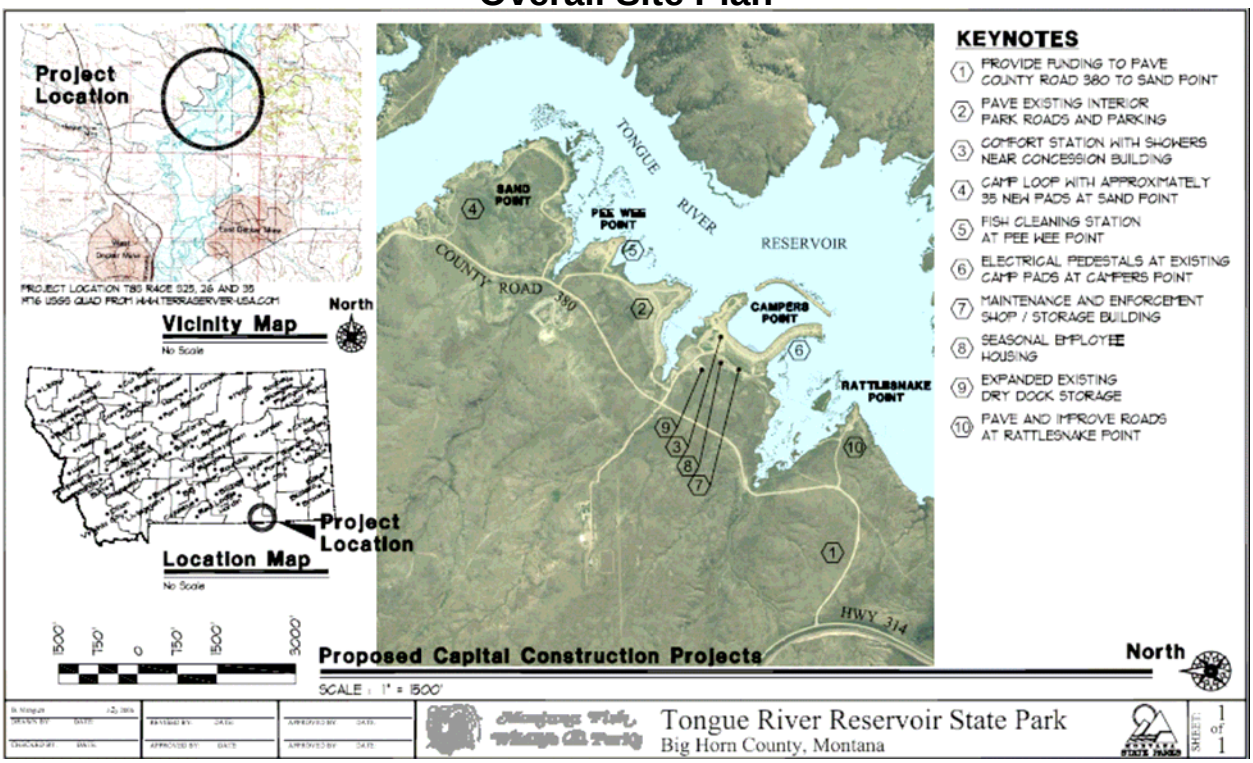
[Y] H. Any new above ground utility lines?
Comments: Upgrading the electrical system for the entire park will include the replacement of above ground utility lines.

[Y] I. Any increase or decrease in campsites of 25% or more of an existing number of campsites?
Comments: A new camp loop with approximately 35 new pads will be constructed at Sand Point

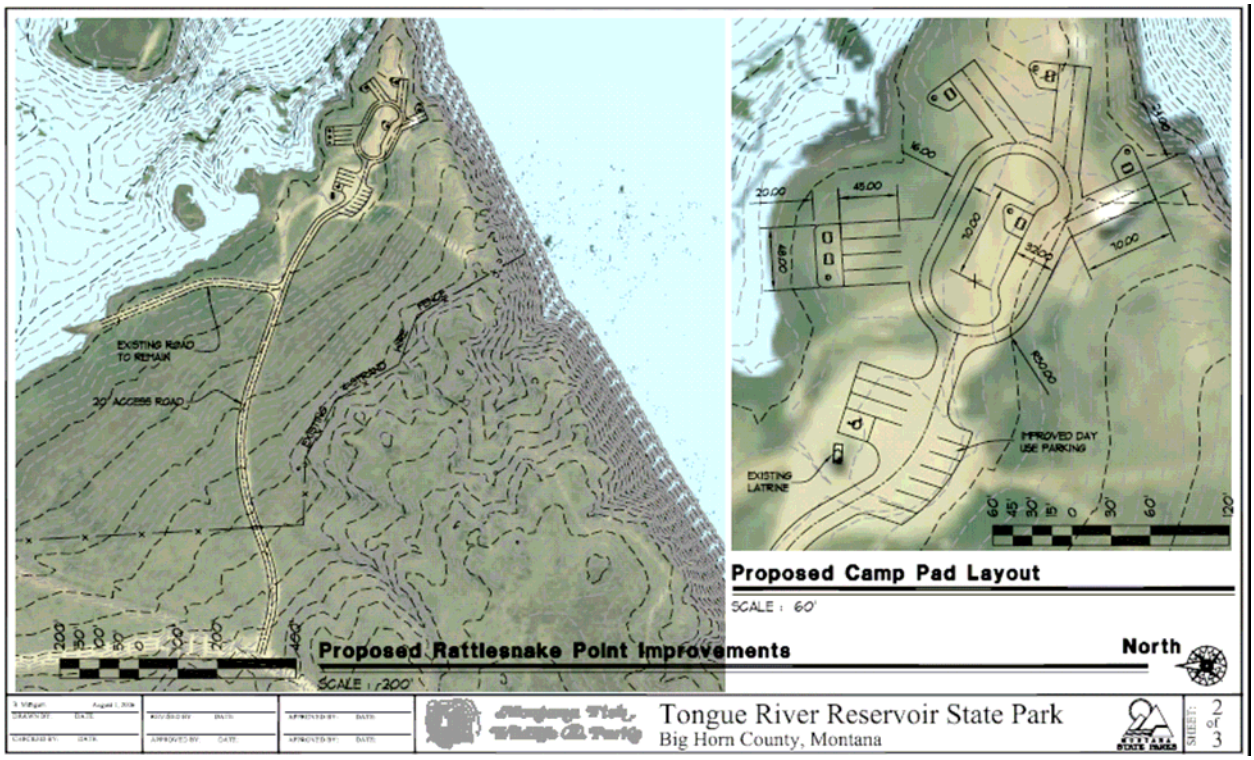
[ ] J. Proposed project significantly changes the existing features or use pattern; including effects of a series of individual projects?
Comments:

If any of the above are checked, HB 495 rules apply to this proposed work and should be documented on the MEPA/HB495 CHECKLIST. Refer to MEPA/HB495 Cross Reference Summary for further assistance.

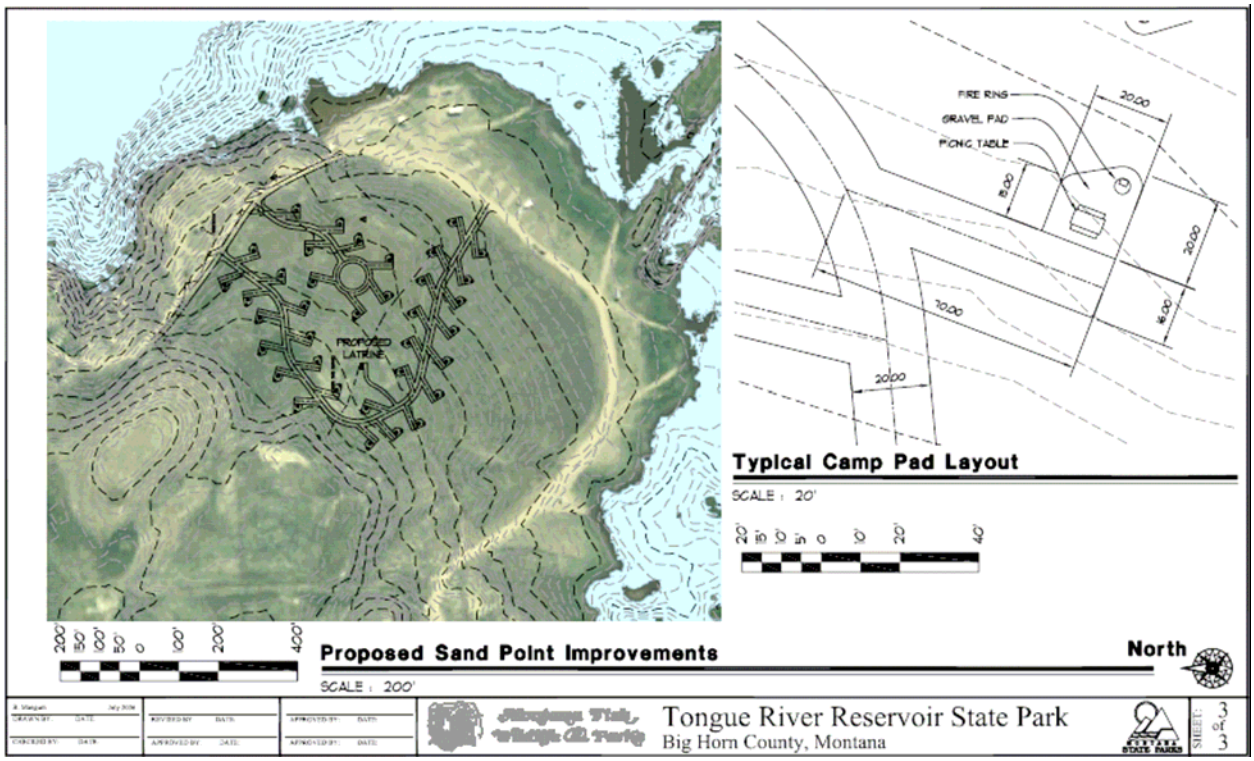
Appendix 2
Overall Site Plan



Appendix 2 continued
Site Plan
Rattlesnake Point Improvements



Appendix 2 continued
Site Plan
Sand Point Improvements



APPENDIX 3
TOURISM REPORT
MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (MEPA)/HB495

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks has initiated the review process as mandated by HB495 and the Montana Environmental Policy Act in its consideration of the project described below. As part of the review process, input and comments are being solicited. Please complete the project name and project description portions and submit this form to:

Victor Bjornberg, Tourism Development Coordinator
Travel Montana-Department of Commerce
PO Box 200533
1424 9th Ave.
Helena, MT 59620-0533

Project Name: Tongue River Reservoir State Park Enhancement
Project Description: Tongue River Reservoir State Park is located on Tongue River Reservoir. It is located six miles north of Decker on Secondary 314, then 1 mile east on county road. Tongue River Reservoir State Park receives approximately 80,000 visitors annually. Many activities are available at this 642-acre state park, including boating, fishing, swimming, camping, picnicking, bicycling, wildlife viewing, and photography. The proposed project will consist of:

1. Paving the county road from HWY 314 to Sand Point Turn off
2. Constructing a Fish Cleaning Station at Pee Wee Point
3. Constructing a Comfort Station at Pee Wee Point
4. Constructing Seasonal Housing
5. Upgrading the Water system to accommodate seasonal housing

A paved access roadway will accommodate the number of visitors and the type of visitors to the park. In addition, the paved road will decrease dust in the park. Constructing a Fish Cleaning Station will allow for site protection by providing an environmentally safe and acceptable fish cleaning site. The Comfort Station will provide personal comfort for visitors. The seasonal housing will accommodate staff members to stay on site. Finally, upgrading the water system will provide safe water for visitors and staff members.

1. Would this site development project have an impact on the tourism economy?
   NO **YES XX** If YES, briefly describe:

As described the project appears to improve visitor services in both access and facilities at Tongue River Reservoir State park. The facilities will aid in proper management of the site as well, which will provide benefits for both park users and administrators.

2. Does this impending improvement alter the quality or quantity of recreation/tourism opportunities and settings?
   NO **YES XX** If YES, briefly describe:

It appears that both the quantity and quality of the tourism/recreation opportunity and setting will be improved by this project.

Signature Victor Bjornberg, Tourism Development Coordinator, MT Commerce Dept.
Date June 21, 2006

Appendix 4
GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Affected Environment – The aspects of the human environment that may change as a result of an agency action.

Alternative – A different approach to achieve the same objective or result as the proposed action.

Categorical Exclusion – A level of environmental review for agency action that do not individually, collectively, or cumulatively cause significant impacts to the human environment, as determined by rulemaking or programmatic review, and for which an EA or EIS is not required.

Cumulative Impacts – Impacts to the human environment that, individually, may be minor for a specific project, but, when considered in relation to other actions, may result in significant impacts.

Direct Impacts – Primary impacts that have a direct cause and effect relationship with a specific action, i.e. they occur at the same time and place as the action that causes the impact.

Environmental Assessment (EA) – The appropriate level of environmental review for actions that either does not significantly affect the human environment or for which the agency is uncertain whether an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required.

Environmental Assessment Checklist – An EA checklist is a standard form of an EA, developed by an agency for actions that generally produce minimal impacts.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) – A comprehensive evaluation of the impacts to the human environment that likely would result from an agency action or reasonable alternatives to that action. An EIS also serves a public disclosure of agency decision-making. Typically, an EIS is prepared in two steps. The Draft EIS is a preliminary detailed written statement that facilitates public review and comment. The Final EIS is a completed, written statement that includes a summary of major conclusions and supporting information from the Draft EIS, responses to substantive comments received on the Draft EIS, a list of all comments on the Draft EIS and any revisions made to the Draft EIS and an explanation of the agency's reasons for its decision.

Environmental Review – An evaluation, prepared in compliance with the provisions of MEPA and the MEPA Model Rules, of the impacts to the human environment that may result as a consequence of an agency action.

Human Environment – Those attributes, including but not limited to biological, physical, social, economic, cultural, and aesthetic factors that interrelate to form the environment.

Long-Term Impact – An impact, which lasts well beyond the period of the initial project.

Mitigated Environmental Assessment – The appropriate level of environmental review for actions that normally would require an EIS, except that the state agency can impose designs, enforceable controls, or stipulations to reduce the otherwise significant impacts to below the

level of significance. A mitigated EA must demonstrate that: (1) all impacts have been identified; (2) all impacts can be mitigated below the level of significance; and (3) no significant impact is likely to occur.

Mitigation – An enforceable measure(s), designed to reduce or prevent undesirable effects or impacts of the proposed action.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) – The federal counterpart of MEPA that applies only to federal actions.

No Action Alternative – An alternative, required by the MEPA Model Rules for purposes of analysis, that describes the agency action that would result in the least change to the human environment.

Public Participation – The process by which an agency includes interested and affected individuals, organizations, and agencies in decision-making.

Record of Decision – Concise public notice that announces the agency's decision, explains the reason for that decision, and describes any special conditions related to implementation of the decision.

Scoping – The process, including public participation, which an agency uses to define the scope of the environmental review.

Secondary Impacts – Impacts to the human environment that are indirectly related to the agency action, i.e. they are induced by a direct impact and occur at a later time or distance from the triggering action.

Short-Term Impact – An impact directly associated with a project that is of relatively short duration.

Significance – The process of determining whether the impacts of a proposed action are serious enough to warrant the preparation of an EIS. An impact may be adverse, beneficial or both. If none of the adverse impacts is significant, an EIS is not required.

Supplemental Review – A modification of a previous environmental review document (EA or EIS) based on changes in the proposed action, the discovery of new information, or the need for additional evaluation.

Tiering – Preparing an environmental review by focusing specifically on narrow scope of issues because the broader scope of issues was adequately addressed in previous environmental review document(s) that may be incorporated by reference.